

New York University
Amheida / Trimithis 2022 Season Report
Directed by Roger S. Bagnall

1. Introduction

The 2022 study season at Amheida, which entailed the documentation, conservation, and study of finds discovered during previous excavations seasons, took place at the SCA magazine at Ismant and at the blockhouse at the site of Amheida. It began on March 13 and ended on March 30, 2022. The team consisted of Roger S. Bagnall (director, papyrologist); Khaled Ismail (numismatist); Mahmoud Samir (conservator); Saad Bakhit (illustrator); Ashraf Barakat (assistant to the director); and Gaber Murad (house manager). The MSA inspector at the SCA at Ismant was Marwa Gamel and the restorer was Fatma Solaiman; Mr. Abdallah Mohammed Nasr was the MSA inspector at the Amheida blockhouse.

The conservation and documentation focused primarily on objects excavated in 2012 and 2013 in Area 2.3 (Building 7, a church), with some work at the SCA magazine also on finds from the 2010 season in Area 2.1 (Building 1, a fourth-century CE house), and photography of objects found in earlier excavation seasons from Areas 1.4 (a courtyard) and 4.1 (the temple hill). (Map 1)



Map 1. Areas at the site of Amheida whose previously excavated objects were conserved, photographed, and studied during the 2022 season.

2. Work at the SCA magazine (Figs. 1–4)

2.1. Conservation

During the 2022 study season, 75 Roman-period coins were conserved, photographed, and studied: 39 specimens were recovered during the 2012 and 2013 excavation seasons in Area 2.3 and the other 36 were retrieved during the 2009 and 2010 seasons in Area 2. They were cleaned and conserved using a formula of Formic acid at 3% for cleaning, Benzotrizole at 5% for inhibition, Paraloid B44 at 5% for isolation, and Ultrasonic pen for mechanical cleaning. While many coins remain illegible after conservation, those that still preserved legible obverses and reverses are consistent with the already-established dating for both areas, i.e., the fourth century CE (Figs. 1–2).



Figs. 1-2. Coin inv. 16102 from Area 2.3. Maiorina, minted in Rome, 348–361. Obv. (left). Bust of Constantius II, draped, pearl diadem. Rev. (right). Fel Temp Reparatio, falling horseman, with mint mark in the exergue.

2.2. Photography

Photographs of the above-mentioned coins were taken before, during, and after the conservation process. Photos were also taken for 15 objects from the 2010 season and one from the 2004 season in Area 2.1 (primarily terracotta lamps and small bronze objects). Additionally, a group of 20 Greek ostraca found during the 2012 and 2013 seasons in Area 1.4 were photographed using both digital and infrared cameras (Fig. 3). New photography

was taken for the over 800 Roman coins that comprise the coin hoard found in 2012 in Area 4.1.

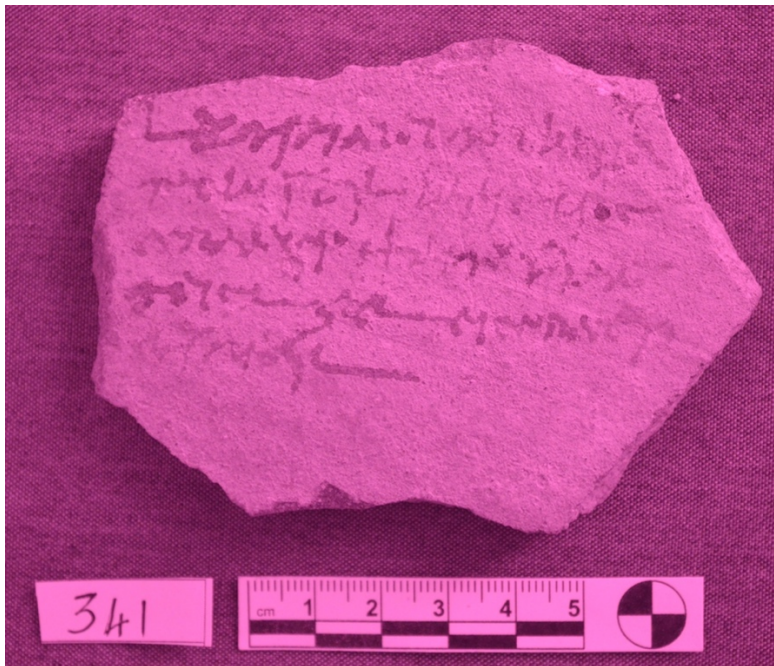


Fig. 3. Infrared image of ostracon inv. 341 from Area 1.4.

2.3. Drawings

1:1 pencil drawings of 10 objects from Area 2.3 (glass vessel fragments, small beads, and bracelet fragments) and 21 objects from Area 2.1 (gypsum stoppers, fragmentary and complete terracotta lamps (fig. 4), and some fragmentary glass jewelry) were made to provide illustrations for upcoming publications.

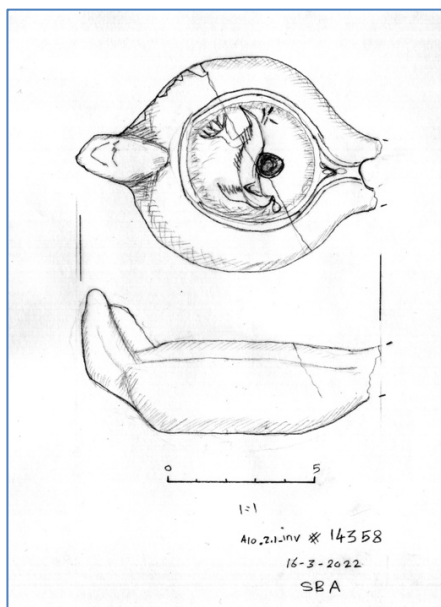


Fig. 4. Pencil drawing of a terracotta lamp (inv. 14358) recovered from Area 2.1 in 2010.

3. Work at the Amheida Blockhouse (Figs. 5–7)

3.1. Conservation

Two Roman coins and three bronze and iron objects from the 2012 and 2013 excavation seasons in Area 2.3 were cleaned and conserved during this study season, using a formula of Formic acid at 3% for cleaning, Benzotrizole at 5% for inhibition, Paraloid B44 at 5% for isolation, and Ultrasonic pen for mechanical cleaning. The best preserved coin is inv. 14605, a votive coin of Constantius II (Fig. 5).



Fig. 5. Coin inv. 14605 recovered from Area 2.3 in 2012 and conserved and imaged in 2022. Nummus centenionalis, mint uncertain, perhaps Antioch, 341–348. Obv. (left). Bust of Constantius II, draped, pearl diadem. Rev. (right). Vota inside a wreath: VOT XX MULT XXX.

3.2. Photography

Over 80 objects from the 2012 and 2013 excavation seasons in Area 2.3 were photographed. They include textile fragments, fragmentary glass vessels and jewelry (i.e., beads and fragments of bracelets), gypsum stoppers, fragmentary gypsum and terracotta figurines and decorations (Fig. 6), iron nails, a carnelian scarab, and fragmentary terracotta lamps.

Inv # 14505



Fig. 6. A new digital image of a fragment of molded gypsum plaster recovered from Area 2.3 in 2012 (inv. 14505). On the external surface, seven curls are visible, possibly part of the hair of a statue.

3.3. Drawings

For over 90 objects found in Area 2.3 during the 2012 and 2013 excavations seasons 1:1 pencil drawings were made to provide illustrations for upcoming publications. Many of these objects are those that were also photographed, e.g., the fragmentary gypsum decoration (inv. 14505) with seven curls illustrated above in Fig. 6 (Fig. 7). Other categories of objects that were drawn during this study season include fragmentary glass vessels (e.g., *unguentaria*, beakers, bowls, and plates), glass jewelry (predominantly beads but also fragmentary bracelets), bone hairpins, jar stoppers, fragmentary terracotta lamps, and two small wooden decorations, possibly part of furniture inlays.

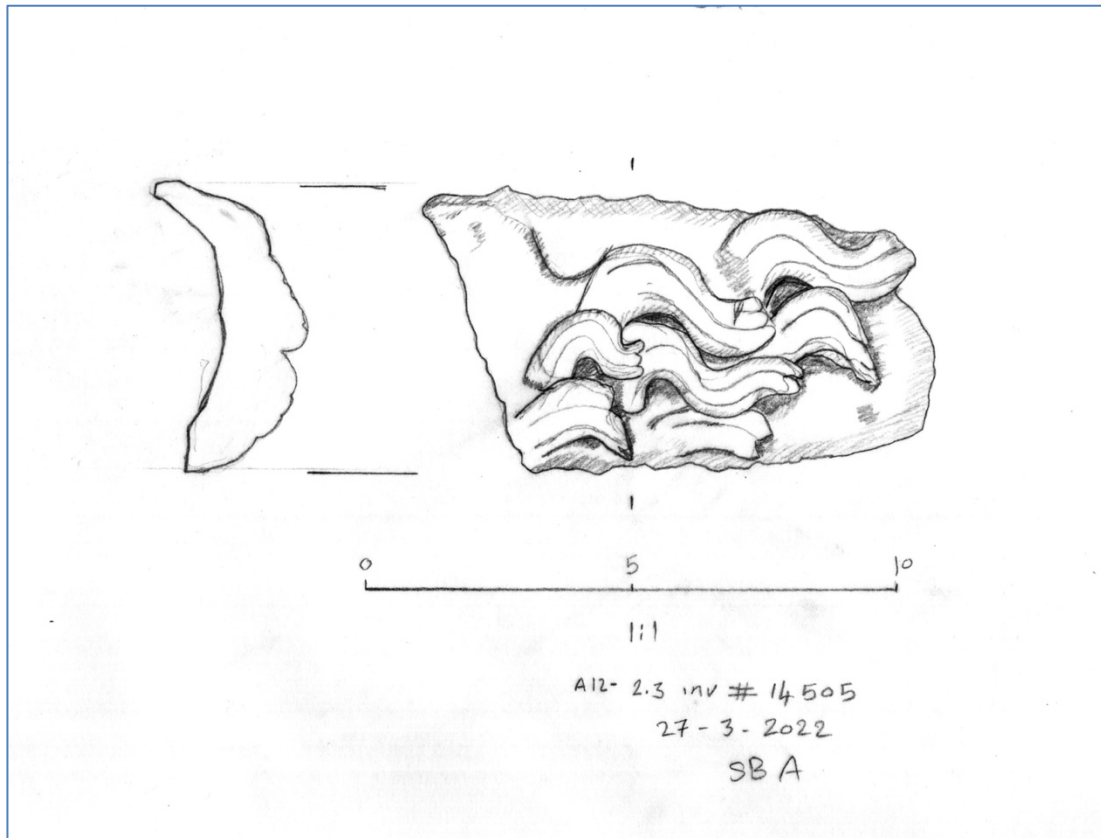


Fig. 7. Pencil drawing of a fragment of molded gypsum plaster recovered from Area 2.3 in 2012 (inv. 14505). On the external surface, seven curls are visible, possibly part of the hair of a statue. Cf. Fig. 6 above.